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BIRDS OF THE LOWER URUGUAY.

BY WALTER B. BARROWS.

(Continued from p. 30.)

130. **Buteo pterocles** *Temm.* AGUILA (EAGLE).—Many individuals of this species were seen on the Arroyo Gualaguaychú the last of April, and one was secured there. Another was brought me from an estancia near town on July 2. They were usually noticed sitting very upright on the tops of tall trees, where it was almost impossible to get within shot.

131. **Buteo erythronotus** (*King*).—Many were seen on the Pampas, April 10 and 11, while travelling by diligence from Carhué to Azul. They frequently remained perched on the iron telegraph poles beside the road, allowing the coach with its ten horses to pass at full gallop within easy gunshot of them. At such times the characteristic markings were easily distinguishable.

132. **Heterospizias meridionalis** (*Lath.*). AGUILA ROJIZO (REDDISH EAGLE).—Not unfrequently seen at Concepcion in cold weather, and a single one was seen as late as September 29.

About July 21, 1880, during an almost unprecedented rise of the river, many rather scarce Hawks became quite abundant for a few days, and among them was the present species. A female, taken July 21, appeared so gorged with food that it was easily

shot, but an examination showed that though its crop was crowded to its utmost capacity, it contained nothing but young grasshoppers, not a trace of other food being found in its stomach.

133. **Geranoaetus melanoleucus** (*Vieill.*). AGUILA (EAGLE). — An abundant resident at all points visited, and not at all difficult of approach. In ascending the Uruguay by steamer it is one of the most constant features of the landscape, sometimes seen sailing in circles overhead, but oftenest sitting motionless on the highest branch of some dead tree which rises from the tangled masses of lower growth on the low islands along the swampy shores. On the Pampas it was frequently observed, and on the Ventana, where it was abundant and doubtless nested, it was ridiculously familiar.

While hunting Partridges one morning, I walked directly up to one of these Eagles, as he sat on a stone gazing at me, and when, finally, at a distance of eight or ten yards, he started to fly, a charge of No. 8 shot was sufficient to stop him. The same morning another was killed in almost the same way with No. 6 shot. On March 8, while near the Ventana, a pair was seen in a plumage entirely new to me. Seen from below they were entirely glossy black, with the exception of the tips of the tail-feathers and primaries, which were pure white. If this is the normal adult plumage it must be rare, at least about Concepcion, as I never met with an example of it among over a hundred specimens observed there. Of the nesting habits I learned nothing, except that on the Ventana a pair constantly resorted to an inaccessible ledge near the summit, where I believe they must have had a nest. Döring says they nest abundantly *on the ground* along the Rio Negro of Patagonia, placing the nest usually, however, on some small eminence along the bank of the river.

134. **Accipiter sp. incog.** A female of a species allied to *A. fuscus* was taken at Concepcion, July 14, 1880, and another individual (possibly the mate) was seen very near the same spot a few days later.

135. **Falco sparverius** *Linn.* ALCONCITO (LITTLE FALCON). — A very abundant bird at Concepcion, where a few are resident and doubtless breed, but especially plentiful in spring and autumn. I did not see its nest.

A young female taken January 21, 1880, was peculiar in having the ovaries of *both* sides equally developed, though both were small.

This species was also abundant at Bahia Blanca and along the Sierras to Carhué.

136. **Elanus leucurus** (*Vieill.*). — A rather scarce resident. I noted it only about twenty times in the course of as many months. It was oftenest seen in winter.

137. **Rostrhamus leucopygus** (*Spix*). — Apparently not common, as it was only taken twice — both times in summer and in swamps where *Ampullaria* abound.

I once saw at Concepcion a flock of fifteen or twenty small Hawks hovering over the interior of a swampy island, and presume they belong to this species as they were not “Chimangos,” and I never saw any other species congregate in this way.

138. **Milvago chimango** (*Vieill.*). CHIMANGO. — By far the most abundant of the birds of prey, it being no unusual thing to have thirty or forty in sight at once. They take the place of our Crows, walking about in the plowed fields, collecting around the slaughter-houses or any dead animal in the fields, haunting the margins of the rivers, and keeping an eye on all exposed bird's nests. They are very unsuspicious, and being seldom shot at, may be approached, at almost any time and place, without any precautions. They are credited (doubtless correctly) by some writers with nesting on the ground, but this does not seem to be true of them at Concepcion. I inquired carefully of the natives, and was invariably told that they nested “like the Carrancho,” in trees.

On September 26, I saw a pair carrying sticks to a tree in which there was a partly completed nest, but the birds dropped the sticks on finding themselves observed. Again on November 6, I found in a tree a nest of sticks in which were the shells of several eggs precisely like those brought me by natives as veritable eggs of the Chimango, as I believe they were.

Considering the abundance of the birds, and their familiarity, it seemed strange to me that although I frequently searched in many localities, both on the ground and in trees, I never discovered an occupied nest of this species. As before stated, however, during the spring months I was often unable to give more than half a day per week to field work, and this will, perhaps, account for many oversights with regard even to common birds. The eggs which I obtained were miniatures of those of the following species.

139. **Polyborus tharus** (*Mol.*). CARRANCHO (meaning unknown). — Abundant and well known everywhere, but appearing

in unusual numbers wherever the food supply is suddenly increased, as for example, during those periodic overflows of the river to which the name *creciente* is given. When the rise is quite sudden the destruction of small quadrupeds is very great, and the Carranchos are very sure to be on hand. The regular *creciente* occurs usually in October, and the river then rises gradually to a height of five or six feet above its usual mark, and in the course of a week or two, subsides again quietly. In July, 1880, however, the river rose quite suddenly until it reached a point some twelve feet above low-water mark. As a result hundreds of square miles of low land were flooded, and in many places the water extended backward along the smaller affluents for many miles, doing considerable damage to stock, etc. Of course there was a general exodus of "all four-footed beasts and creeping things" from the flooded district. Along the edge of the water thousands of the little caviás scampered in dismay, while the bodies of thousands of others were thrown up to the waiting Carranchos, which stalked along the shore by hundreds. Wild cattle which had been hiding for years in the swamps were now forced to come ashore and take their turn under the lazo, while many a rare deer and rarer jaguar fell victim to the rifle of the estanciero. For a week or two the unequal struggle went on, and then the receding waters allowed the survivors to return to their old haunts, if they could find them, while the estanciero quietly counted his bundles of new hides and wished the river would rise every year to the same height.

While the high water lasted the Carranchos, gorged with carrion, and naturally heavy and sluggish, were almost as tame as barn-yard fowls, and there was abundant opportunity for any one so disposed to study their disgusting habits and make his series of skins as large as he pleased. I respectfully declined the offer, so far as the skins were concerned, preferring to keep my entomological and ornithological collections separate so far as practicable.

Although feeding frequently on carrion, the birds evidently appreciate fresh meat as well. I once had hard work to prevent a Teal, which had fallen in the water, from being carried off by one, and though I did succeed in this case I was less fortunate at other times. While shooting Ducks along the Piqué in March I killed a beautiful pair of Cinnamon Teal, and wishing to keep them clean

and unruffled, to be skinned later, I laid them somewhat out of sight among the pampas grass, intending to take them on my return in half an hour. At that time, however, I found only a couple of Carranchos, each seated sleepily in the midst of a little circle of brown feathers, amongst which not the smallest morsel of skin, flesh, or bone was to be found.

The eggs were laid at Concepcion from the middle of September until late in November. They vary very much in color, but the average egg showed little trace of the original ground-color, being simply mottled with heavy dashes, spots, and blotches of several shades of brown. Eggs average $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. The bulky nests were sometimes placed quite low on the tops of low, spreading trees, one which I found being only eight feet from the ground. More often, however, the nest is placed at a height of from twenty to forty feet.

140. **Cathartes atratus** (*Bartr.*). CUERVO (CROW). — Not seen at all at Concepcion, but said to have been very numerous in times of drought, when the sheep died faster than they could be skinned. It was occasionally seen in small numbers about the Sierras of the Pampas, the last being seen at Carhué, April 4.

On the Uruguay it was always spoken of as the *Cuervo* (Crow; Raven), but about Buenos Aires the commoner name was *Gal-linaza* (Vulture).

NOTE. — I am not sure that I ever saw *Cathartes aura*, not being familiar with its appearance on the wing, but I find the following in my note-book, under date of March 4, 1880, while camped at the foot of the Sierra de la Ventana.

"Several times since camping here, I have seen a very large bird which seems to be larger in body than the common Eagle (*G. melanoleucus*) and with a very long tail. They hunt over the mountains as well as the level ground, and rise in spirals nearly as well as *Haliaetus*." I remember that when attacked by a pair of the latter, which probably had an eyrie among the crags near by, they soon distanced them by rising in spirals, though both species did considerable flapping before the Eagles abandoned the pursuit. I thought at the time, and am still inclined to believe, that this bird was *Cathartes aura*.

(To be continued.)